

## REMARKS

### **Status of Claims**

Claims 12, 14 and 16-24 are pending, of which claims 12 and 14 are independent.

Claims 12, 14 and 16-24 have been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Claims 13 and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice. Care has been taken to avoid introducing new matter.

### **Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph**

Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments made to these claims overcome this rejection.

### **Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claims 12 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hayashi et al. (JP 2003-185905). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki (US 2004/0081442). These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

Since claim 13 has been cancelled, the rejection of claim 13 is moot.

Applicants respectfully submit that, at a minimum, Hayashi fails to disclose a second operating member and a biasing unit for biasing the second operating member in an outward direction of the first operating member, as recited by amended claim 12. A lens barrel of amended claim 12 has, among other features, a first operating member, a second operating member and a biasing unit, wherein the second operating member can switch between a state of

allowing a rotating operation of the first operating member and a state of preventing the rotating operation depending on whether the second operating member is depressed or not. The second operating member is biased by the biasing unit in an outward direction (i.e., a radial direction) of the first operating member. Accordingly, when a user moves his/her hand away from the second operating member, the second operating member automatically moves back to its original position by the biasing force of the biasing unit. In contrast, it is clear that Hayashi fails to disclose or suggest the above features of the second operating member and the biasing unit.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references. Thus, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 12 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

#### **Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato et al. (US 4,629,305). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishikawa et al. (US 2001/0043279) in view of Sato. Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayashi in view of Matsuo (US 6,973,262). Claims 20, 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato in view of Hayashi, and further in view of Yamamoto et al. (US 5,621,495). Claims 22 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato in view of Hayashi and Yamamoto, and further in view of Iwasaki (US 5,771,411). These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

With respect to claim 19, Applicants incorporate herein the arguments previously advanced in traversal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) predicated upon Hayashi. The

additional cited references do not teach or suggest the above identified features of amended claim 12, from which claim 19 depends, which are missing from Hayashi. Therefore, any combination of the cited references would still fail to disclose the claimed features, and it would not have been obvious to add these features to any such combination. Accordingly, claim 19 is patentable over the cited references.

With respect to claim 14 and the dependent claims thereof, Applicants respectfully submit that, at a minimum, Sato fails to disclose a second operating member and a biasing unit for biasing the second operating member in an outward direction of the first operating member, as recited by amended claim 14. The remaining cited references do not cure the deficiencies of Sato, and it would not have been obvious to add these features to any combination of the cited references. Accordingly, claim 14 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references.

Thus, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 14 and 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

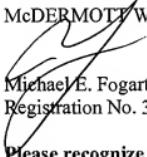
## CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP



Michael E. Fogarty  
Registration No. 36,139

Please recognize our Customer No. 53080  
as our correspondence address.

600 13<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005-3096  
Phone: 202.756.8000 MEF:TS  
Facsimile: 202.756.8087  
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